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Observations on the Andamanese, by Surgeon FRANCIS DAY,
F. L. S. and F. Z. S.

[Received 2nd March, read 1st June, 1870.]

The inhabitants of the Andaman islands have for many years been looked upon with great curiosity by Ethnologists,* by mariners, and by the Indian Government in consequence of their vicinity to our convict settlement of Port Blair. Exaggerated accounts have been given of their appearance; they have been regarded as cannibals; pieces of flint, now used for shaving or tattooing, have been described as arrow-heads for shooting fish; in fact their showing themselves on the shore has given rise to as much awe as that of large wild carnivorous animals bent on mischief. Merchant vessels generally kept many miles to the East of Barren island, in order to avoid contact with the aborigines.

Having been lately directed to proceed to the Andamans for the purpose of making certain investigations respecting the fisheries† I took the opportunity of obtaining as much information as I could respecting the aborigines. In my enquiries I was warmly seconded by Mr. H o m f r a y ‡ the energetic officer who, (amongst his other duties,) has charge of these people and their "Homes," and who alone, amongst the foreign races, has mastered their language. I also carefully went through Mr. H o m f r a y 's monthly reports. Consequently a large amount of the information, contained in the following, was derived from him, whilst he accompanied me in my

* It is stated at the Andamans, that many skulls of convicts have been sent away as those of the aborigines, whilst a tame monkey, received from India and given to the crew of a passing man-of-war has lately received a new specific name in London as being indigenous on these islands!

† Much of this information is contained in my report on the fisheries of the Andaman islands. I have, however, drawn it up more in detail, as the former is not available for the general reader.

‡ Known to the Andamanese as *Myo-jolah*, "master of masters."

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wanderings with the Andamanese around the various stations, looking out for the best fishing-grounds. These people worked with us in the jungles amongst the small streams, they speared fish in the harbours, shot them with bows and arrows, or captured them with their hands, or by means of small nets in the sea, and elsewhere they collected shells, crabs and reptiles, and in fact appeared desirous of doing whatever they were able.

I do not propose in this paper entering into any speculations respecting the origin of these people,* but to confine my remarks to their present appearance, manners, customs, language, amusements and methods of providing themselves with food.

Those now living on the island are estimated to be about 1000 in number, but this must be a guess, as no means are available by which such could be verified or refuted. Around the settlement, there are better means of estimating their strength, and there they appear to be about 400, divided into tribes, rarely above 30 strong, for when they are more, they quarrel. The country is partitioned amongst them, and one tribe does not interfere in the territory of another, in fact such used to cause war between them. Tribes fix upon a spot for a depôt, here the sick are tended, and any extra supplies, they may have, are hoarded. On two tribes meeting, the great sign of friendship is the presence of women, for when hostility is intended, the weaker sex are sent to a place of safety.

Their huts, if they deserve the name, are merely palm tree leaves most loosely put together; they try and get shelter under any overhanging trees or rocks. Bones of animals or fish which have been eaten, shells, &c., &c. are all thrown into one heap close by, the smell of which is very offensive. When they can no longer bear it, they move on, returning when they imagine disagreeable odours have disappeared.

These people, when guests of Europeans, or expecting presents, have moderately good tempers, but a very slight offence rouses

* Some may be of African origin or mixed African descent, their woolly hair and other signs apparently afford such a solution, but some again have entirely smooth hair, and but few very thick blubber lips or the Hottentot's projecting jaws. Shipwrecked sailors have generally been killed by the arrows and spears of the Andamanese, or else the last few survivors have been kept as slaves and thus assisted in continuing this mixed race.

them. When in their jungles they are said to be very irritable. One evening after we had returned from fishing, the aborigines retired to the "Home" at Port Mouat, when a lad of about 8 years ordered a girl, much older than himself, to go and bring him some drinking water; as she did not move at once, he shot an arrow at her which took effect just above the eyebrow. Another day one small boy with a knife cut to pieces a girl's basket for some equally cogent reason.

Quarrels in the "Homes" are of frequent occurrence, but the riotous ones mostly listen to the words of the elders, and become quiet. If, however, one of them refuses to be appeased, the other sits quite still, and does not answer him, and this mostly ends in an arrow being shot near, rarely hitting him; subsequently all is over. They do not appear to be vindictive amongst themselves. In November 1864 the North and South point tribes, having had a misunderstanding, were induced to meet, and a pig was given them for a feast. However they again fell out, and a knife which had been supplied to kill their food, was employed by one of the South tribe to threaten the life of one of the North, and all ended in a terrible row. It was some time before order was restored, when they embraced and howled for a quarter of an hour.

One of the last great quarrels with the convicts occurred in June 1864, and was occasioned by a murder committed in the following manner. On the morning of the murder, the aborigines entered the north outpost in some numbers, carrying with them their bows and arrows, and begged for food, but did not obtain what they considered sufficient. They asked for more, which was refused, and being irritated, they sought their opportunity, and while the Tolidar Girbar Singh was off his guard, Jacko, the chief of the North tribe and Moriarty, chief of the South tribe, fired at him with their arrows from a few yards distance, and with fatal effect. Girbar Singh was the man whose duty it was to punish them, a class of persons not generally looked upon favourably.

Amongst themselves they usually give up anything another may wish for, so should they desire to retain an article, they secrete it.*

* A walk with them through a bazaar is no sinecure, they want everything they see, think it very hard not to get what they ask for, and steal whatever

Should an European they know be at his meals, and they are allowed to come inside the room, he has but little chance of concluding in peace. They mount the chairs, get on to the table, look at, and often touch everything. One will say to another, that piece is mine, and so on, in fact they apportion out everything amongst themselves, and watch with much interest all that is eaten. If he does not soon cease, remarks become more severe. "What a greedy man he is!" "He will eat everything, leaving us nothing," and so on. If he drinks any liquor, they consider most of the "grog" as they term it, should be theirs.*

Their language is very deficient in words, and the different tribes have distinct dialects. So much is this the case, that the inhabitants of the Little Andamans are unable to understand those of the South Andamans. Now many English and Hindustani words are beginning to be incorporated with their language. As for numerals, they are entirely absent, a necessity for them has not as yet been perceived by these people, so when they talk of having taken quantities or numbers of anything, it is impossible to have any idea of their meaning, and what still more increases this difficulty is, that in framing an answer, they often do so from the question, almost repeating the same words. This has perhaps led to their being considered more untruthful than they really are. Thus being asked, if it is true that a wreck has occurred, they will probably say it has, and perhaps it has at some period long past.

They divide the day into three portions, sunrise, midday, sunset, recognising no subdivisions. In like manner, the year with them has three seasons: *first*, the dry, *ea-ra-bodilin*, or Northern sun, a period which extends from February to May: *secondly*, the rainy *goo-mo-lin*, being from June until September: and *thirdly*, the moderate season, *pa-pa-lin*, lasting from October to January.

they can lay their hands upon. Secreting articles is not looked upon as a wrong deed, but as cleverness by these people.

* Being asked one day how the owner of the dinner was to live, if they deprived him of what was his food, they were very ready with an answer, observing, if we poor people want fish we must catch it, if we require pigs we must kill them, if we wish for a hut we must build it, but it is not so with you. You never built the house you live in, you did not make the furniture, grow your rice, catch your fish, kill your mutton or even cook your food. You call to some one to bring you what you want and it comes, so if we eat all this, you have only to call for more. They thus finished the argument, and almost as rapidly consumed all the food.

They are by no means deficient in acuteness, and appear to have good memories, thus they soon discovered that they were called by the newcomers by names anything but complimentary, and as every race has such epithets at their disposal, which they freely employ, the Andamanese (who like a joke) recognise each race by the several terms of abuse which were used in addressing them.

On first seeing writing employed, they laughed at it, protesting the impossibility of making out what had been committed to paper, and now they look upon it with great curiosity.

Crying signifies with them reconciliation with enemies, or joy at meeting old friends or acquaintances from whom they have been long parted. When two tribes meet, the newcomers have to commence, and the women have the priority in weeping; subsequently the men take it up; whilst it becomes the duty of the hosts to reciprocate in the same manner, first the females weeping, and afterwards the males. Occasionally, the performance cannot be completed in one night, especially should the parties have been long separated, it may even be continued through several successive days. After the crying has been completed, dancing begins; that of the women, a few years since, differed from that of the men, they having to clap their hands, &c., sing to the music of the stamping of the men's feet. Their songs are the recital of events which have taken place since their last separation. The conclusion of the performance is for both parties to join in a grand dance. Now, however, the men and women occasionally dance together. Females who intend dancing, have the modesty to employ a few extra leaves, and they relieve the men in striking the sounding board with their feet. Should it be the intention to dance all night, an extra coating of paint is put on, which is said to act as a preventive against exposure. It is very evident that dancing is a favourite amusement. Having occasion one day (as we were starting upon a fishing excursion) to go inside one of the convict barracks at Port Mouat, the Andamanese set to work to dance with great vigour on the boarded floor, and it was with the greatest difficulty that we could induce them to desist.

They do not appear to have many amusements. Staring at them-

selves in a looking-glass is a great attraction. Having held a watch to the ear of one at Port Mouat, the next day every body of the tribe came to listen to the ticking, with which they seemed as delighted as children. The day I arrived at Viper, they saw a kite for the first time, and were excessively pleased at flying it, doubtless once having seen it, they will now manufacture them themselves. Excellent as is their aim in throwing stones, some one last year showed them how to connect two stones together by a piece of string, and to throw them up, so that they catch in the branches of a tree at a great height from the ground.

Although clothes scarcely form part of their attire, they always beg pieces of cloth, and it is curious to see how they mimic those who consider garments a necessity. Their laziness is probably not to be surpassed; sooner than get a bamboo to knock down fruit, they will cut down the tree or its branches. They seem to think the convicts are an inferior race, and should work for their benefit.

In mentioning the *clothing* of these people, perhaps an incorrect term is employed, for the males are essentially destitute of it. Paint forms their clothing, its mode of application shows whether it is put on for simple ornament, with the intention of joining in the dance, to prevent sickness, drive away disease, or is a sign of mourning. Sometimes, however, a few fibres are fantastically worn around the forehead, neck, waist, or below the knee, in the form of a garter, but all other clothing they consider immaterial. They believe themselves to be decent, and laugh at other people's ideas of propriety; still when landing at Ross, they used not to object, as a favour to the residents, to wearing trousers for the occasion, and these were kept ready for them at the landing-place, being returned on their re-embarking in their canoes.

The women, however, have some slight show of decency, for they twist up fibres into the form of thin ropes, which they cover with cloth and wear round their waists, whilst dependant behind, (also sometimes in front) are about a dozen tails hanging half way down to the knees, anteriorly two or three leaves fresh gathered from the jungle, completes their essential costume. As ornaments, they wear a string of their ancestors' bones around their necks, or a skull is slung in a basket over their backs, or a belt on their shoulders,

should they have a baby to carry. Destitute of clothing themselves, these savages pity foreigners going through their jungles, especially in the rains.

Painting or adorning the body is done with red or olive-coloured earth, and this is the business of the females. For the former, iron is collected from a mineral spring, burnt red* and mixed with fat, and this is used as an ornament or charm. I had an opportunity of seeing one of these springs, and the aborigines were excessively jealous, lest I should help myself to any of the exuding iron, as they required it all for themselves. They collected it into leaves, binding it up into parcels with fibres. Olive-coloured mud is likewise a decoration, when painted in an ornamental manner, but if the body, head and forehead are daubed over with it, and the head plastered with mud, it is a symbol of mourning.

All the adults have their bodies tattooed, which operation is commenced from an early age, and until it is completed, they are not considered eligible for marriage. As soon as they begin to swim, which is at about 8, tattooing begins. Formerly it used to be done twice a year, the instrument employed being a piece of sharpened flint bound to a stick; but now a smaller portion of the body is operated upon once a fortnight, and this goes on until the individual is adult. The present instrument is a bit of a broken bottle, inserted into the split extremity of a stick, for they dread a knife. A considerable amount of blood is lost in these operations, which are performed by making an incision nearly one-third of an inch long and going to some depth. They do not form figures, as is done by the Burmese.

Having an objection to hair, they shave all off, with the exception of one narrow strip from the crown to the nape, which, however, is kept cut close. They rarely have eyebrows, beard, moustache or whiskers, and usually but few eyelashes. Formerly shaving

* Dr. W al d i e having been good enough to analyse their red preparation, reports it to be as follows:—

Peroxide of iron, ...	...	...	...	...	42·7
Quartz in small fragments and very little of any other	...	...	...	...	56·3
rocky or earthy matter, ...	...	...	...	...	·9
Water expelled by ignition, ...	...	...	...	...

100·0

was done every six months, by old women, with pieces of sharpened flint, but now every fortnight by means of bits of broken glass bottles. This custom is evidently a sanitary one, as the jungle is so full of insects, that it would be impossible to keep the hair free from vermin.

They marry as soon as they are able to support a wife, and I understood that the rule was, only to have one. The youthful swain eats a peculiar kind of ray fish termed *Goom-dah*, which gives him the title to the appellation of *Goo-mo*, signifying "a bachelor desirous of marrying." Girls, arriving at a marriageable age, wear certain flowers, to distinguish themselves by. Before marrying, young men take a species of oath, after which they sit very still for several days, scarcely taking any food. Those who have been pig hunters refrain for one year, commencing in April, from eating pork, using turtle, tortoise, or fish instead, but they do not cease hunting pigs, as they are necessary for the food of the tribe. The turtle hunters in like manner use pork during this probationary year, and during this period honey must not be tasted. This is apparently done for the purpose of ascertaining whether the individual is able to support a family.

The marriage ceremony is simple, a man about 16 or 18 is engaged to a girl of 13 or 15 belonging to a different family, with the consent of the girl's guardian, who is generally the chief of the tribe. On the marriage day, they are seated apart from the others, and pass their time in staring at one another. As the shades of the evening set in, the girl's guardian advances, and taking the hands of the pair, joins them together; they then retire into the jungles where they pass their honey-moon. On the bridegroom's return to the tribe with his bride *Jeedgo*, crying and dancing are kept up with great spirit. Subsequent to marriage, they are not so useful as previously for the general welfare of the community, the married woman, termed *Chamah*, has now to erect her husband's hut and attend to his requirements, consequently she is not ordered about by the chief.

The wife has to perform all the home duties, providing shelter, mats for lying upon, cooking the food, procuring water and shell fish, carrying loads when changing from place to place, shaving

and painting her husband, as well as attending him when sick. The husband has to protect his wife, make canoes for fishing, the implements for hunting pigs and turtle and spearing fish, whilst he also obtains food when not provided by the bachelors or spinsters.

Widowers and widows have no objection to re-marry. I saw one woman who had done so within one month of her husband's death, but this was looked upon as rather premature.

When children are born, the infant is first bathed in cold water, and then warmed over a fire, on the supposition that by beginning early to stand changes of temperature, it will be of a hardy constitution. They do not appear to be very successful, however, in rearing these little ones. Men and women seem equally fond of carrying the babies about, all pet them, when they cry for anything they give it, and over-kindness early consigns the little one to the grave.*

Children are named some months before they are born, after some family or favourite cognomen, consequently there is no distinction between that of the males and the females. Owing to their vocabulary of names being limited to about twenty, they have to prefix some word to each, expressive of something in the appearance of the individual, or the locality from whence they come.

Amongst the numbers of Andamanese I saw, there was only one woman who had as many as three living children, of this she appeared to be very proud, and I was informed, that no other family possessed more than two. From April 1868, to April 1869, 38 deaths were reported, and only 14 births amongst those families which reside near our settlements. During four years, only six infants have lived, whose parents resided at the homes; of monthly visitors only 12, and of the half yearly ones some 20.

The Andamanese, at least those who reside near the settlement, are not a long lived or healthy race, but few appear to pass two score years. They suffer severely from fever and lung complications, and although the jungles are their natural home, illness

* Those children which are brought up in our schools, and clothed, rapidly succumb, as might be anticipated, to the non-clothing and exposure system, to which they become exposed on returning to their families, and resuming their life of freedom.

attacks them in newly cleared pieces of land as virulently as it does the foreign races. The sun's rays and strong winds act injuriously upon them, in fact they say a chief of the evil spirit rides upon the strong sea breezes and causes sickness. The high winds and the rains in August are occasion of a good deal of fever and bowel affections.

They have no remedies except their olive-coloured mud, with which they plaster themselves for headaches, and also employ as a non-conductor of heat. In 1864 one having been wounded by slugs whilst pillaging, the only remedy his tribe knew of was covering the spot with their red or olive paint. Now they have great faith in quinine, and take it readily for fevers or headaches. If medicines are offered them, they invariably request the donor to taste it first, and subsequently they have no objection to swallow it.

Should an adult die, he is rapidly buried, and the tribe migrates for about a month, to another locality, at least eight or ten miles off, in dread of the ghost of the departed. A corpse is viewed with much fear, whilst almost equal repugnance is shown when going near a burial-ground, which with them is never on a hill nor on an elevated piece of the country. The following instances give an idea how their chiefs are buried.

J a c k o, chief of the North tribe, died on July 1st, 1865, leaving two married sisters, whose husbands' duty it was to bury his corpse. Death took place at 6 A. M. and within two hours his remains were rolled up in leaves by the oldest people of the tribe, and corded with fibre, preparatory to their being consigned to the grave. The latter was merely two feet deep, and merely a few feet above high water mark. Here the corpse was placed in a half sitting position, with the face turned towards the rising sun. Previous to filling in the grave, one by one they took their last farewell, and each gently blew upon his face and forehead. After the grave was filled in, there did not remain more than six inches of earth above the body, but this is deemed sufficient to preclude the ribs from being broken, whilst there are no wild animals to exhume the corpse. A few stones were now heaped over the grave, above these some burning faggots, and mourning garlands were placed in conspicuous places along the shore, to mark a chief's interment. Before retiring, a cup

of water was left at the head of the grave, in case the spirit of the deceased should feel thirsty during the night.

Four months subsequently, the nearest of kin went to the place of sepulture and brought away the lower jaw, which about that time had become divested of flesh; a month afterwards, the shoulder bones and a rib were extracted, and after six months the skull, now freed from impurities. This was slung round the neck of the principal mourner, and subsequently every one had it in turn to carry about.

The ceremony for the burial of a chief is, however, generally somewhat different from that described for J a c k o. A stage is erected some twenty feet from the ground, and on this the corpse is placed. The powerful spirit of the chief it is hoped will be satisfied, and not injure any one who may incautiously pass near, whilst a fire is lighted below this stage to scare away any evil spirits which may be lurking about. The extraction of the skull and bones, it is considered, requires great skill and courage, whilst by keeping them carefully, and wearing them during pain and sickness, it is supposed the ghost of the departed will be induced to be friendly to the wearer.

Should a stranger die amongst a foreign tribe, his funeral-rites are entirely neglected, the chief generally directs some of the young men to carry away the corpse, and throw it into the jungle or into the sea. The evil influences of a stranger's spirit are not dreaded.

Should those of other tribes go to condole and sympathise with a widower, the custom is to fall into his arms, both embracing each other and crying for about ten minutes, subsequently the afflictions are recited.

When I was at Port Mouat, the Rutland chief was in mourning for his only child, and was daubed all over with olive-coloured earth (a process which is repeated daily), whilst a rather thick coating of mud covered his head. This mourning lasts for one month. During periods of deep sorrow they are very silent, entirely refraining from the use of red paint and other decorations, from taking much food, even from eating their favourite pork, whilst honey must not pass their lips, but instead they have daily to throw honeycomb, if obtainable, into the fire. As soon as the period of mourning has

expired, they wash off the olive-coloured earth, and revert to their red paint.

Having no ties to keep them to one place, the Andamanese wander about for food, or as their fancy dictates. They have scarcely a want, but as luxuries they esteem tobacco, especially Cavendish, and "grog." They do not care for sugar, but are immoderately fond of honey, they eat the *cuttle fish*, are much addicted to *chitons*, but despise raw oysters. Formerly they appear to have consumed almost anything; on wet days, worms, caterpillars, roots, nuts, man-grove seeds, sharks, shell-fish, &c., &c., articles which they now generally refuse. Amongst fish, they prefer the mullet, and one day having placed a quantity of different species before them, they helped themselves in the following order, observing that the first took the best, the last got those which were most inferior: *Chorinemus*, *Platycephalus*, *Horse-mackerel* or *Caranx*, *Chrysophrys calamara*, and lastly *Tetrodon* or frog-fish, which latter has generally the credit of being poisonous. They eat cats, but now spare dogs, because they are found to be useful.

Government instituted various Homes or places of shelter for these aborigines, which many of them make their head quarters. It is a principle wisely commenced, to induce them to cease plundering, and which has more undoubtedly had a most satisfactory effect. But it is a mistake to suppose that they subsist on the food provided by Government, for the whole allowance is only 200 rupees monthly to cover all expenses. In the year 1868-69, the following were the earnings of the aborigines: 500 pigs, 150 turtles and tortoises, 20 wild cats, 50 iguanas, and 6 dugongs, irrespective of fish. The total number of rations given was 48,248 giving a daily average of 132 persons including women and children, allowing each individual only 9 pies daily, and showing an increase in those fed of 14,575 rations over the previous year, but with a decrease of expenditure of Rupees 209-3-4, thus demonstrating them to have been more self-supporting. Since the establishment of these homes, a great change has been inaugurated, the convicts are left unmolested, implements of agriculture are not stolen, the fishing stakes are left undisturbed, the gardens are no longer pillaged, run-away convicts have been re-captured, and ship-wrecked sailors assisted.

At the "Home," the following is the manner in which they pass the day. At a very early hour they have something to eat, for about 4 A. M. their uncovered bodies become cold, which necessitates their replenishing their fires, and once up eating begins. When residing in the same house, there is no rest after this early hour. About 7 A. M. some of the men go out foraging according to the season, it may be pig-hunting, fishing, or capturing tortoises or turtles. The young men and boys assist in making, paddling and steering canoes. The women in a body go for shells, shellfish, fruits and bulbs, in which they are assisted by the girls; whilst the elderly people keep at home, making baskets, nets, bows and arrows, attending the sick, &c. Between 2 and 8 P. M. the foragers return with their spoil, these are as far as possible equally divided amongst all.

Prior to the advent of the Europeans, the Andamanese lived entirely upon the products of the waters and of the jungles, never tilling the soil, and storing up but little for a future day's supply. One of the first questions usually asked respecting these people is, "Are not they cannibals?" They repudiate the idea, and in return wish to know "why when food abounds should they devour human beings," a feast which they believe would cause their death.

~~They eat nothing raw, not even fruit. In cooking meat, they~~ either throw it on the embers, turning it over when the under side appears to be done, or else cooking the flesh of the tortoise, turtle, or pork in unbaked earthen chatties.* Their appetites are large, for they appeared to be easily able to consume 6 lb of fish at one sitting, and after a very short time had no objection to begin again. A large *Pinna* forms their plate, a *Nautilus* shell their drinking cup. They have no regular periods for their meals, when they are hungry they eat, no matter at what time, whilst it is an almost essential commencement to give them a good meal before starting for any excursion.

Their principal food at the first or north-sun period is honey, fruit, and turtles. In the rainy season, they do not wander about very much, owing to the difficulty of obtaining shelter, then the

* I have seen them cook a prawn by placing it inside the bowl of a pipe which they were smoking!

jack seeds last them for three months. In the early part of the middle season pigs are common, but when becoming scarce fishing and turtle-catching takes their place. In the report for July, 1865, I observe it stated "they are only now aware that cucumbers, potatoes, and pumpkins are eatable, and the use of tobacco, all which a short time ago, they used to fling away."

Pigs, towards the month of September, begin to rove about the jungles, finding their way to the coasts and creeks, and it is during this time, that many are killed. In the year 1865, they first began to use dogs for pig-hunting which they learnt from some run-away Burmese convicts, previously they had to lie in wait hours and sometimes days, even in the hopes of seeing one or two, now the dogs find them almost at once, they are consequently held in great esteem, and every dog they see they wish for. The Andamanese, however, have curious ideas respecting pork as food, and when they are able to choose, use it as follows. The children and weakly persons eat sucklings, the bachelors and spinsters use those of medium size, whilst adults prefer the stronger boar.

As they capture their principal supply of fish and turtle during the low tides, and do not dry or salt any, it follows that they have abundance at that time of the lunar month, whilst at the intervals they are comparatively destitute.* At the change of the monsoon (October) they generally shift their quarters to more healthy spots. One of the encampments which has been dwelt in for some time, is not a model of cleanliness, whilst innumerable fleas and other animals render going through it anything but a pleasing occupation. Beef they consider too coarse for food, neither as a rule will they eat birds. About January the *Dugong* shows itself in Port Mouat Bay, coming to feed upon a species of sea weed which is also relished by the turtles.

In January likewise honey becomes common and they bring down the honey-comb with great dexterity, neither smoking the bees nor being stung themselves. A wild shrub "Jenedah" exists in the jungles, and its juice appears to have an intoxicating effect upon the bees. The person who is to ascend the tree, takes a piece in his hand, and biting through the bark, the pungent juice exudes

* The turtle season with them ends about the month of April.

into his mouth, this is spat at the bees, which are said (for I did not personally witness it, though I was shown the shrub, and an Andamanese went through the process,) to become intoxicated, or else to fly away. Wax obtained from the honey-comb is much used for their bow strings, likewise for covering the fibre which attaches the heads to arrows, as well as for stopping leaks in their canoes.

One of the most necessary pieces of property to these people is a canoe, a moderately sized one being capable of accommodating about 20 persons, whilst it is used for the purpose of obtaining food for about 30. It is scooped out of a tree by men, who work with a species of adze. They take their turn at this employment, during which period they are supplied with food by the others. When completed, their canoe is of a very fragile construction, and rarely lasts above one year, for they are continually thinning its sides by scooping out and ornamenting its interior. In fact when made, no care is taken of it, and its sides are easily stoved in. It is ballasted by stones, and has a prow projecting about two feet, on which the fisherman stands. These prows become especially useful whilst fishing turtle and spearing skates and rays.

The bamboo pole which is employed for pushing along the canoe, has a sharp moveable iron head at its one extremity, and to this is attached a long line. When the bamboo is thrown, and the spear becomes imbedded in the prey, it slips away from the bamboo, but being attached to the line, the animal is securely held by the fisherman. Their eyes, whilst slowly and silently moving about, are as sharp as hawks: the spear is mostly thrown with a good aim, and should the fish be large, some of those in the boat dive down, attacking the victim with knives and spears, whilst others endeavour to pass a line over the game. Should the water be too deep to pole about, one or two men or boys paddle the boat, as silently as possible, the man on the prow directing them which way and how fast to go, by signs made with his hands or feet, but not a word is spoken.

For their small or hand nets, very similar to a common landing net without the handle, they use a fibre as a thread, which they work at very neatly, employing their fingers as a mesh, and by

changing from the little to the index digit, they gradually augment its size as desired. When turtles are scarce, a large net is used, this is attached to stakes which encircle the whole of a reef to which these animals resort for food. Just before the tide commences to ebb, they fix the net, thus penning in all the turtles which may be there at the time, but which fight most desperately to break out of the enclosure; the Andamanese now use spears to secure them, and as a rule but few escape.

Their bows and arrows are mostly employed for shooting fish in shallow water, the upper two-thirds of the arrow is a light reed, the lower portion a heavier sort of wood armed with a piece of iron, or a sharp nail. Major H a u g h t o n in 1862 observed, in the Proceedings of this Journal, upon the flint arrow heads having been employed by them for shooting fish, and some such fashioned pieces of flint are still found amongst their heaps; but the aborigines do not recollect when these articles were so employed, they, however, remember their being in use for shaving and tattooing.

It will not be amiss in this place to take a slight retrospect concerning the origin of the "Homes," which are now kept up for the Andamanese. When these islands were taken re-possession of in 1857, doubtless the aborigines caused great trouble. Convicts, who ran away, were killed, as were also others who were felling the jungles, for these savages move about so stealthily, that scarcely a bough moves, nor does a leaf rustle. They are excellent trackers and thus ascertain the number of persons that have passed, and judge pretty accurately how long it is since they passed.

They helped themselves to the implements employed in felling timber, they used convicts' leg irons for spears, and nails for arrow-heads, they had no scruple as to how they were obtained. Consequently their vicinity led to insecurity, to the prevention of works of clearance being carried on, to garden cultivation being extended, to the prevention of bamboos being obtained from the jungles, to the plundering of the fishing-stakes, and the settlement suffered accordingly.

At first hostages were taken from the tribes, some of whom were kept in irons in the convict settlement, a plan which does not ap-

pear to have caused unqualified satisfaction, whilst on faults being committed the lash was freely resorted to. On June 12th, 1864, three convicts at the North outpost, in a most unprovoked manner were ruthlessly murdered, so all hospitality and friendship was withdrawn, they were prohibited entering our stations, unless unarmed, and if seen plundering, the sentries were directed to fire upon them with slugs. In those times the aborigines distrusted us as much as the convicts feared them, and on coming into the settlement, they kept their arrows in their bows ready for immediate recourse to, and whilst some parleyed, others stood watching a few yards off, ready for a fight, or to secure a retreat.

Owing to the hostility of the Andamanese, convicts had to be restricted within bounds, no one could venture into the jungles. About the middle of June, some of the aborigines visited Haddo, food was given them, and they were asked to bring some bamboos, which they promised to do, but only brought a few dead ones. They were evidently merely spies, for after a day or two, they entered Aberdeen and Phoenix bay stations in force, plundered the gardens and carried off some convicts' clothes. However, towards the end of the month, they appeared inclined to become more friendly, they brought in some escaped convicts, whom, however, they first plundered, besides removing every bit of iron from the boat in which they had escaped. On being taxed with this, they at first pleaded surprise, then said, they would make restitution, and brought a canoe as an exchange for the mischief they had done to the Government boat. At first this was not quite understood and the canoe was sent back, but they returned it the next day, explaining that they desired it to be kept as a reimbursement for the injury they had done to the Government boat, so no longer considered the canoe theirs.

A Home was kept up on Ross island, but those who had been engaged in plunder, were not permitted to land there, thus Moriarty, who had assisted in killing the Tollidar (already referred to), was considered ineligible, which caused very great dissatisfaction. The women and children made rafts of bamboos and so floated to Ross, or even swam over on the support of a single bamboo. In October this year, they again plundered Aberdeen and its neighbourhood,

and it began to be very evident that unless some hold were obtained over the tribes, all works must cease. It was proposed to issue a general amnesty, especially as the chiefs were becoming very irate, and without their controlling power the tribes were found to be most hostile, plundering everything they could lay their hands on. In the month of December this amnesty was carried into effect, and then to a great extent the chiefs began to keep the people in order. However the aborigines continued to be very suspicious, imagining that in their being treated at Ross, they were sorts of hostages, and used frequently to request to be taken over to the mainland, as they were not permitted to swim over, because they took more property with them, than they had a legal claim to. One day the whole forty asked to go, and finding no objection was raised, they returned after a few days on a bamboo raft and became quiet.

In May, 1866, the Home was removed to the mainland as the jungles' presence was not considered any longer to be desirable. In November of this year, the murderer Jim was released, the tribes promising in future to try and stop murders, and to discontinue the use of war bows and arrows. Some of them were taken to see an execution, and it was explained to them, that that was the manner we treated murderers, and they at once expressed their intention of refraining from murders in future. In 1868-69, they apprehended fourteen convicts from the Punjáb and two Burmans who had escaped, and also brought in some shipwrecked mariners.

My first interview with the people was on January 9th, 1870, at North bay where I went with Mr. Homfray to look for them and induce their coming fishing. The sea was rather high, and it was not until 11 A. M. that we discovered one of their canoes, containing two of these people. We pulled for the place, they, however, had landed and made their boat fast. It will be difficult to forget their appearance. There sat on the stumps of trees two lads, destitute of clothing. They had some ornaments made of fibre around their heads, and strings like garters below the right knee. As for inducing them to move, they simply declined, observing they were waiting for more of the tribe; however, they pointed out where the encampment was.

Leaving them, we went to their camp to try our persuasions on some of the others to accompany us to Viper. We found a number of females and children, all of whom appeared very glad at seeing "Myo-jolah." They were engaged as usual, in smoking short clay pipes, and eating, having taken some fish, prawns, and crabs. On being told that I wanted fish, they brought out all they had, and let me help myself. After a long talk, the females consented to go to Viper, for as Mr. Homfray had judiciously remarked, the boys would soon follow. It was finally arranged that they should go in our boat, and we were to take a canoe in tow, containing some more of the aborigines. Scarcely had we started before one of them seized my umbrella, and it was explained to me that she did not like the sun's rays, and proposed that "I should hold my umbrella over her head."

When we arrived at Viper, we found thirty more people had preceded us, and by evening we mustered nearly seventy. It was, however, too late to go out, so we passed the afternoon in feeding them, letting them fly a kite, with which they were highly delighted, in ascertaining the Andamanese names of fish, and information respecting the best fishing grounds.

The next morning eating commenced about 5 A. M., and by 6.30 we had 43 of them in the boats, and left for Phoenix bay and South point. Before starting, however, they ridiculed the idea of our getting fish, as it was not low tides whilst there was a strong wind and rough water. Still as my stay was limited, we persevered, and on arriving at Phoenix bay, had to commence proceedings by lighting large fires and distributing rice, plantains, poppaws, sugar-cane and tobacco, whilst they caught crabs, which they cooked on the embers. In fishing we did so badly that at their suggestion we crossed the point to South bay. As we went near the inhabited part of the station, they begged for what they saw, and collected little bits of iron. The tide being low and the water not so rough, they did better at this place; they shot one *Lethrinus rostratus*, Cuv. and Val., one *Teuthis vermiculata*, Kuhl. and v. Hass., and several *Glyphidodon sordidus*, Forsk. Besides these, the younger children captured many specimens of *Periophthalmus Koelreuteri*, Schn.

On the 11th, we left Viper for a fresh water creek with 20 of the people. On arriving at the landing place, we saw a storm rising, and the aborigines waved about their hands and arrows, to beat or flog away the evil spirit which was creating the disturbance; nevertheless they were unsuccessful, and it poured all day. We landed at one of their deserted encampments, but the fleas and other vermin were so plentiful, we had to retreat to our boats. Their huts were palm leaves, supported on sticks in the most primitive style. We took a few fish and bivalves up the creek, but the weather became so severe that we were compelled to return. The Andamanese asserted that a large fresh water lake exists in the island, but too far away for us to go to. As we were going back, the boat hook catching in a tree went overboard; instantly one of the Andamanese boys darted overboard and recovered it.

On the 13th we went across to the Andamanese Home, a long thatched shed, the head quarters of one of their tribes. On one side of the entrance was a large heap of the bones of tortoises, turtles, dugongs, and also a few shells, the refuse of their meals. Inside were people and dogs, the latter as regards feeding evidently considering all were on an equality, whoever could take the food first being the lawful owner. Here we again had to give them fruit and sugar-cane, which was equally divided under the inspection of their queen, a quiet looking venerable old woman. Having distributed pipes and tobacco, we at last induced them to start for a cruize through the jungle, in order to ascertain what fish there were in the fresh water streams, and what specimens of natural history we could collect.

The distance across country was five miles, but the road a mere jungle foot track. We told the aborigines to obtain fish, shells, reptiles and grasses, and they set to work to collect. We had not gone far, when those ahead called out to us to come on, and pointing to a tree asserted, they saw a snake between the bark and the stem. The fissure was scarcely noticeable, but having removed the dead bark, out came a snake (*Lycodon aulicus*) which we secured. They also obtained from the streams, specimens of *Gobius giuris*, H. B., *Ophiocephalus gachua*, H. B., *Haplochilus panchax*, H. B., and *Muraena maculata*, H. B., also some Crustacea, many land

shells,* some lizards,† and five species of wild grasses. About 6 p. m. we arrived at the Home at Progress creek where we left them. The next day was a repetition of the previous one only carried on on the opposite side of Port Mouat. On the 15th I had to return to Ross, but in the early morning, prior to our starting, the Andamanese brought in two tortoises, a turtle, and some fish shot and speared since 6 p. m. the previous evening.

From the 18th to the 20th, assisted by these people, I made an examination of some of the sea fisheries, and the mode how they take sea fish, a short description of which will perhaps give the best idea of how they work. On January 18th, it being low spring tide, we started from Port Mouat at 7 a. m. for MacPherson's straits and arrived at the encampment of the Rutland chief about 11 a. m. We found them close to the sea shore, where some fine trees overhung the rocks, on which they were lazily reclining. We passed the body of the only child of the chief tied up in a tree, its spirit being supposed to be powerful, the little one having died about a fortnight previously.

About 3 p. m. we embarked, taking with us seventeen of the aborigines in our boat, their ages varying from about nineteen to ten years. The females and younger children, with three hand nets remained in the stern of the boat: the bachelors with three bows and arrows and one spear in the forward part, and as usual the latter were constantly chaffing the former. One youngster took the rudder and we prepared to start for "Jolly boys" island, some two miles away. Scarcely was the anchor raised, when a lad in a canoe came with some fish, and likewise handed in a piece of dead coral, amongst the branches of which numerous beautiful little fish were to be seen alive, as well as some lovely little crabs. On suggesting that they might have got in there by accident or been put there for show, over the side of the boat dashed a young savage, who dived down and rose again to the surface with another piece of coral as large as his head, and in it were forty small but living fish.

* *Cyclophorus foliaceus* Chem., and *Spiraxis Haughtoni*, Bens., being the most common.

† *Tiaris suberistata*, Blyth, is the commonest tree-lizard; besides, several species of GECKOTIDÆ occur.

As we were again on the eve of starting, we heard a shout of *úchrah, úchrah* (fish, fish) when another canoe arrived, with some splendid specimens obtained by means of bows and arrows. At last we started, the Andamanese as usual carrying fire with them and soliciting tobacco and pipes, their most constant word being *jay, jay*, (give, give). As a foretaste of what might be expected, provided they did well, we presented the chief with a looking-glass, some tobacco, and a box of fusees, whilst we also gave our fellow passengers another box of fusees, which, however, they had exhausted before we arrived at the termination of our short pull, as they were unable to resist the amusement of making fire without trouble to themselves.

We passed shoals of fish, many being of the most brilliant hues. Now our fishing commenced, the females started off along the shore to fish in their manner, the bachelors with their bows and arrows and spears proceeded as far out upon the reef as they could, whilst the younger children stayed with us to collect shells and small fish.

As soon as we commenced wading into the sea, hundreds of fish darted about, either from under one piece of coral to another, or from sea-weed to sea-weed.

We first collected the little *Blennies* which are exceedingly active and disappear in holes under the coral, just as one is feeling sure of obtaining them, we, however, captured a sufficient number of specimens. Occasionally when feeling under a sea-weed or coral for a fish, a crab would lay hold of the hand of the investigator. At one yell rather louder than any which had preceded it, I went to the spot and saw the beautifully scarlet and striped *Pterois volitans* swimming off, whilst all the Andamanese refused having anything more to do with the "sea devil," as they term these fishes, on account of the severity of the wound produced by their spines. The water was very clear and shallow, and all this fish's elongated fins were expanded, it appeared in no particular hurry, but seemed to be quietly sailing away, as much as to challenge us to touch it. I threw a pocket handkerchief over it, and thus obtained it safely.

Many fishes, never previously seen by me, darted past us, and the little Andamanese began to warm to their work and took some larger fishes as *Serranus dispar*, Günther, *Scolopsis ciliatus*, Lacép., *Mugil*

macrochilus, Bleeker, *Teuthis vermiculata*, K. and v. H., *Glyphidodon sordidus*, Forsk., *Chærops cyanodon*, Richardson, *Hemigymnus melanopterus*, Bl., *Callyodon viridescens*, Blkr. &c. Whilst thus engaged, we heard a loud shout out on the reef, and on looking, perceived a skate, *Rhynchobatus tuberculatus*, Cuv., nearly six feet long struggling with some of our fisherman. We found, however, that there were many small species which we could not capture, so the next day returned with a large sheet. On splashing the water, these fish retired amongst the branches of the coral. We then spread the sheet close to the coral, sinking it with stones and placing some sea-weed and sand upon it. As soon as all was quiet, the fish came from their place of security, got amongst our sea-weed when we lifted the sheet out of the water, and thus obtained them. The Andamanese are familiar with this mode of catching fish.

We continued collecting about an hour, during which period we obtained, without using anything but the boys' hands, many species of fish, about 60lb weight of shells and specimens of the so-called sea slugs, *Bêche de mer* (*Holothuria*) which abounds there. In about one and a half hours 31 large mullet, *Mugil macrochilus*, Blkr., averaging about 3lb. each, and upwards of 30 other large fishes as well as many small ones had rewarded the labours of our archers, and that without the loss of a single arrow. The succeeding day, the same parties killed 56 large mullets by bows and arrows within the space of two hours.

As soon as a shoal of fish, or even one large fish is viewed, all become at once on the alert, they dash about with the greatest activity, run over the sharp coral without caring for it, whilst their eyesight is most acute. They fire their arrows at objects in the water, which no European, unused to the work, could perceive. They appear to aim under the fish, and mostly hit it through the bowels, when struck, away darts the unfortunate victim carrying off the floating arrow, which, however, soon becomes entangled in the sea-weed or else the tired and wounded fish gives in, the arrow floats, the captive's life is nearly over. The smaller children have miniature bows and arrows, the latter being unarmed, but having its end sharpened; with these they practice upon small fishes, also on those which have been wounded by their elders. The usual

mode of killing captured fish is to bite through the vertebral column just behind the head, but some of the sea fishes they first exercise the younger children upon. The fish is thrown into the sea, and of course darts away, the boys and girls dash in after and recapture it. Sometimes they will do this, especially with the *Teuthididae*, several successive times. To a stranger it at first appears very improbable that they will recapture it, but I never saw them lose one.

As we were preparing to leave, the Andamanese having asserted that they had obtained as much as they could carry and sufficient for food, one of the girls brought a specimen of the pretty yellow and white banded *Amphiprion percula*, Lacép., and on being told that it was good, observed she could get numbers more. She took us to a sea nettle, *Actinia*, which she detached from the coral rock, by inserting her hand behind the attachment of this polype, and on shaking it into the hand, two more of these little fishes came out. Subsequently this was repeated to twelve others, and all had two living fish inside them, except one which had three. They asserted that this was their usual abode. A few days previously, Captain Hamilton had observed to me that some little striped fish lived inside a polype at North bay. One day he dug one out, dragged it to the shore and captured three little fish from its interior, replacing them in the sea they appeared not to know what to do, swimming round and round as if looking for something. The living polype was now returned to the sea and they at once swam to it, following it as it was dragged back again through the water to its original locality. As I was going over to North bay fishing, he came with me to see if he could not find a specimen, unfortunately after discovering one and obtaining a fish from it, *Amphiprion bifasciatum*, Bl., he got stung by the polype, consequently I did not see it, but I have the fish. At Gopaulpore, I found living specimens of *Therapons* inside *Medusæ*, which the fishermen asserted to be common.

On returning towards our boat, a large number of esculent swallows were observed soaring about, some of them darting in, others coming out, of a low cave. We sent in some of the Andamanese to look for nests, and they brought us two old ones, observing the season was too late, whilst the convicts had cleared it a few months

previously. We obtained some specimens of the birds by standing at the entrance of the cave and knocking them down with our hands as they flew out. Further on, we came across a *Chiton* attached to a rock, and they drew attention to it as being a great dainty. But on being asked their opinion upon *Holothuriæ* and oysters as food, they expressed great disgust at the idea of eating them.

It was dark by the time we reached the boat, but some of the aborigines went before us, had lighted a fire and were cooking and eating fish. They divided their captures before we left the island, but there was a second division on reaching their encampment as the chief came on board our boat, and he claims everything. After he is satisfied, it is time for the rest to receive their shares. We gave the chief several presents, amongst which the spears for *Dugong* hunting appeared to be most acceptable, and concerning which all expressed unqualified satisfaction. He gave us a large turtle, some more varieties of fish, wished us "good night" in English, and we left this tribe, after having been three days with them. Their chief and his people appeared more inclined to work than either of the other two tribes, amongst whom we had previously been. Still in conclusion, it is but just to remark that all behaved well, whether hunting the jungles for snakes, and shells, or the streams, backwaters, estuaries, creeks, or the sea for fish, although it was plain that all except the Rutland islanders, considered it was a considerable trouble. One tribe in fact requested to know how soon I was going, as they were becoming tired of work, and hearing that if we did well that day, it would be the last; they seemed stimulated to renewed activity, and were rewarded by my taking my departure.





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